

# Public attitudes toward monitor lizards (reptilia: varanidae): A conservation challenge in the human-dominated ecosystems of Bangladesh

Rahman K., Rakhimov I., Khan M.

Kazan Federal University, 420008, Kremlevskaya 18, Kazan, Russia

---

## Abstract

© 2017 Rahman et al. The present study investigated the public attitudes toward monitor lizards in the human-dominated ecosystems of sub-tropical Bangladesh. In this regard, a total of 100 participants between the age of 15-65 were randomly selected from five different parts (20 participants from each part) of Bangladesh. Based on participants' opinion, *Varanus bengalensis* is mostly known ( $58 \pm 2.20$ ) and *Varanus salvator* is the least known ( $22 \pm 3.48$ ) species among three monitor lizard species found in Bangladesh. Surprisingly, most of the participants ( $77 \pm 0.50$ ) mentioned that monitor lizards are snakes. Though all the monitor lizards found in Bangladesh are non-venomous, a significant proportion ( $63 \pm 1.53$ ) of the participants believe that monitor lizards are venomous and can attack and bite people. The participants' viewpoint throughout the country regarding the above-mentioned issues, however, were somewhat similar ( $\chi^2$  test,  $p > 0.05$ ). Despite their negative perception, most of the participants ( $71 \pm 1.27$ ) agreed that monitor lizards play vital role in our ecosystems. The populations of monitor lizards are declining day by day at an alarming rate. Most of the participants ( $32 \pm 0.50$ ) mentioned that retribution killing is the primary cause of the decline of monitor lizards. The highest proportion ( $56 \pm 1.35$ ) of participants believe that there are no alternatives of awareness raising among local residents if we are to conserve monitor lizards in their natural environment that is shared by people.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.9734/ARRB/2017/33970>

---

## Keywords

Attitude, Bangladesh, Conservation, Ecosystems, Monitor lizards, Participants

## References

- [1] Khan MMH. Protected areas of Bangladesh - A guide to wildlife. Nishorgo Program, Bangladesh Forest Department, Dhaka, Bangladesh; 2008.
- [2] Hasan MK, Khan MMH, Feeroz MM. Amphibians and reptiles of Bangladesh - A field guide. Arannayk Foundation, Dhaka, Bangladesh; 2014.
- [3] IUCN Bangladesh. Red List of Bangladesh Volume 4: Reptiles and Amphibians. IUCN, International Union for Conservation of Nature, Bangladesh Country Office, Dhaka, Bangladesh; 2015.
- [4] Rahman KMM, Rakhimov II. Consequences of habitat loss and habitat fragmentation on the survival of monitor lizard populations in Bangladesh: A review and prospectus. *Journal of Biodiversity and Environmental Sciences*. 2016;8(2):139-145.

- [5] Batt S. Human attitudes towards animals in relation to species similarity to humans: A multivariate approach. *Bioscience Horizons*. 2009;2(2):180-190.
- [6] LaHart DE. The influence of knowledge on young people's perceptions about wildlife. The Florida State University, College of Education; 1978.
- [7] Barkes F. Community-based conservation in a globalized world. *PNAS*. 2007; 104(39):15188-15193.
- [8] Prokop P, Özel M, Usak M. Cross-Cultural Comparison of Student Attitudes toward Snakes. *Society and Animals*. 2009; 17:224-240.
- [9] Rahman KMM, Rakhimov II, Khan MMH. Microhabitat ecology of semi-aquatic *Varanus flavescens* (Reptilia: Varanidae) in altered habitats. *Nature Conservation Research*. 2016;1(3):95-100.
- [10] Rahman KMM, Khan MMH, Rakhimov II. Scavenging behavior of the bengal monitor (*Varanus bengalensis*) in Jahangirnagar University Campus, Bangladesh. *Journal of Scientific Research and Reports*. 2015; 7(7):539-550.
- [11] Ali Reza AHM, Sourav MSH. *Varanus flavescens* (Yellow Monitor): Distribution and reproduction, Natural history notes. *Herpetological Bulletin*. 2010;112:38-42.
- [12] Traeholt C. Activity patterns of free-living water monitor lizards *Varanus salvator*. *Malayan Nature Journal*. 1997;50:301-315.
- [13] Bennett D. A little book of monitor lizards: A guide to the monitor lizards of the world and their care in captivity. Aberdeen: Viper Press; 1995.
- [14] Pianka ER, King DR, King RA. *Varanoid lizards of the world*. Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press; 2004.
- [15] Rahman KMM, Rakhimov II, Khan MMH. Observation of a *Varanus salvator* consuming potentially dangerous waste refuse in Karamjal, Bangladesh Sundarbans mangrove forest, *The Herpetological Bulletin*. 2017;139:33.
- [16] Smith MA. Some notes on the monitors. *J. Bombay. Nat. Hist. Soc.* 1932;35: 614-619.
- [17] Auffenberg W. *The bengal monitor*. University Press of Florida; 1994.
- [18] King D, Green B, Knight F. *Monitors: The biology of varanid lizards*. Florida. Krieger Publishing Company; 1999.
- [19] Almeida A, Vasconcelos C, Strecht-Ribeiro A. Attitudes toward animals: A study of Portuguese children. *Anthrozoos*. 2014; 27(2): 73-190.
- [20] Eagly AH. Uneven progress: Social psychology and the study of attitudes. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. 1992;63(5):693-710.
- [21] Kellert SR. Attitudes toward animals: Age related development among children. *Journal of Environmental Education*. 1985; 16(3):29-39.
- [22] Herzog H. Gender differences in human-animal interactions: A review. *Anthrozoos*. 2007;20(1):7-21.
- [23] Prokop P, Tunnicliffe SD. "Disgusting" animals: Primary school children's attitudes and myths of bats and spider. *Eurasia Journal of Mathematics, Science and Technology Education*. 2008;4(2):87-997.